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ABSTRACT

The most recent evidence available indicates that prejudice against minorities and women is still widespread in America. Schools have not only failed to combat these prejudices, but they have often served to actively promote them. Textbooks generally ignore the position of minority Americans in contemporary life and often discuss minority history from a distorted perspective. The assimilationist ideology deemphasizes cultural differences, while the cultural pluralist ideology exaggerates them. Some combination of the two would work best for curriculum reform. Publishers and schools have responded to the problem of textbook bias by romanticizing about reality and avoiding controversial issues. Textbooks should not avoid, distort, idealize, or romaticize about controversial issues related to minorities. Research in the area of textbook bias demonstrates that: (1) racial prejudice has a negative impact on the development of minority children: (2) certain reader traits can either enhance or minimize the effects of reading on attitude change: and (3) nonacademic aspects of reading content, including sex-typing and minority representation, influence a wide range of factors related to children's achievement in school. Methodological and conceptual shortcomings plague much of this research: there is a clear need for additional research in this area. (Author/RLV)

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"Cultural Fairness in Materials Development" *

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U. S. Commission on Civil Rights

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Introduction

If a child living in the 19th century were to pick up a typical school textbook, it is not unlikely that she or he would come across a passage such as the following:

> "God is the creative process: He first made the black man, realized He had done badly, and then created successively lighter races, improving as He went along. To the white man He gave a box of books and papers, to the black a box of tools so that he could work for the white and red man, which he continued to do."

While children living today would never come across such overt and blatant forms of racism and sexism in their textbooks, the problem of textbook bias still exists. Although the form of textbook bias may be more subtle and insidious, the effect remains discriminatory and equally invidious.

The most recent evidence available indicates that prejudice against minorities and women is still widespread in America. Adolescent Prejudice, a 1975 study of the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, found that religious, racial, and class prejudice is "rampant" among adolescents today, and that schools are doing little to combat it.

Mounting evidence indicates that not only have schools failed to combat these prejudices, but they have often served to actively promote them. Textbooks, the major institutionalized vehicle for the transmission of information about minorities and women, must bear a large portion of the responsibility for the perpetuation of such prejudices.

I am presently working on a study "Biases Against Minorities and Females in Textbooks" at the U. S. Commission on Civil Rights. The study is a literature review which examines the nature, extent, and impact

of textbook biases. We anticipate that the report will be published in 1979, and will include both policy and research recommendations.

Let me describe for you what sorts of biases we have been finding, that is, the nature of the biases. I will then go on to discuss some of the issues surrounding the development of culturally and racially fair instructional materials. Finally, I will briefly describe the research that has looked at the impact of biased vs. unbiased textbooks on various dimensions of their readers' attitudes and behavior.

I. Nature of Bias

History of awareness of textbook biases against minorities

Civil Rights groups have been concerned about textbook biases against minorities for more than four decades. The first formal statement of the problem came in a 1939 pamphlet of the National Organization for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) entitled Anti-Negro Propaganda in School Textbooks. Ten years later, in 1949, the American Council on Education published the first comprehensive study of textbooks and found them "distressingly inadequate. inappropriate and even damaging to intergroup relations".

Textbooks generally ignored the position of minority Americans in contemporary life in both textual and visual material. Moreover, when the history of minorities was discussed it was often from a distorted and disparaging perspective. For example, Black Americans were almost never mentioned in contemporary America, but rather only in the context of slavery and Reconstruction. Depictions of Black Americans as slaves served to perpetuate a stereotype of a childlike, inferior people. Slaves were

depicted as "well treated, happy and contented" and then as "uneducated, bewildered freedmen". There was never any discussion of the enormous injustice done to millions of human beings at the hands of white men, or of blacks' struggles to set themselves free.

The study also examined the treatment of Asian, Hispanic, Jewish and Native Americans. Asian American minorities (e.g., Chinese Americans, Japanese Americans) were frequently presented so as to imply racial inferiority, with such offensive generalizations as "The Chinese coolies . . . worked for starvation wages and lived under conditions that Americans would not endure." In contrast, no positive material about the culture or contributions of Asian Americans was included.

Hispanic Americans were almost totally neglected in the textbooks. Not one book could be found which contained more than one paragraph about any of the Spanish-speaking groups living in America at that time. The few references that were made served to create or reinforce unfavorable stereotypes, for example, references were often made to Mexican immigrants as "wetbacks."

The characteristics, history and problems of Jews were also inadequately presented. Material about Jews gave the impression that little has happened to Jews since A.D. 79, and that Jews living today are "a remnant of a past civilization." Furthermore, the crucifixion story was presented so sketchily that anti-Jewish feelings of students could be reinforced.

A 1960 Anti-Defamation League study noted that anti-semitic desecrations in the United States had reached alarming proportions. The investigators of these acts found that the youth involved "had little knowledge of the human meaning of the Nazi symbols and slogans they had employed" (p.24). The

study concluded that "youth in America appear to be ignorant of the nature and consequences of Hitlerism." "In view of the staggering price humanity paid for underestimating this danger in the 1930's, the aims, methods and consequences of Nazism would seem to be one of history's most important lessons - one not to be neglected in American social studies." (p.24)

Unfortunately, the 1960 study found that the story of the Nazi holocaust was flagrantly neglected in social studies textbooks.

The 1960 study found that textbooks had not improved very much in their treatment of this topic, despite the recommendations of the two earlier studies. Only three out of 15 social problems texts even mentioned the Nazi atrocities at all. One social problems book "manages to devote five pages to Hitler without mentioning the atrocities he caused to be committed". Another book made the following brief mention of the atrocities while comparing due process with dictatorial techniques: "For example, Hitler's dictatorship in Germany 'disposed of' millions of Jews without providing legal procedures". This statement leaves the reader with the impression that the Jews may have indeed been guilty of wrongdoing had there been "legal procedures".

Some of the textbook accounts which were specifically criticized as extremely offensive in the 1960 report were still found in 1969. For example, one account implied that Nazi persecution of Jews was in resporse to Jewish actions rather than as a result of irrational beliefs and policies. In addition, this account juxtaposes a brief and sterile reference to the holocaust with a reference to the Germans as a "once more proud people". Altogether, twenty-one books were found to slight, minimize or gloss over important aspects of the topic, while thirteen books omitted it entirely.

With respect to the treatment of Native Americans, the study found that two major attitudes prevailed. The first was that of "cruel, bloodthirsty

Indians whose rights were unquestionably superseded by the interests of white pioneers" and the second was that of "the noble redskin, a high-minded son of nature". With almost no exceptions, "no convincing picture of Indians as a group, or of the cultural characteristics of Indian life, past or present, was presented".

Large-scale public exposure was given to the problem for the first time in a 1965 Saturday Evening Post article entitled "The All White World of Children's Books". The article pointed out that while more than half of the children in many of the major American cities were black and other minorities, the books these children were using to learn to read were overwhelmingly white.

Following the publication of Larrick's article, there was a heightened awareness on the part of many regarding the need for more "multi-ethnic" books. This was evident in the large amount of publicity and advertising attending the publication of each new multi-ethnic or integrated book. There was an increase in the number of basal readers with a sprinkling of black faces, some photographic essays highlighting black children appeared, and a few black people could be found in fiction picture books. With respect to the historical treatment of blacks, after 150 years of being presented as "sub-human, incapable of achieving culture, happy in servitude, a passive outsider in the development and struggles of the American people", Black American's contributions to American history began to be recognized in the 1960's.

In her 1971 study of "Black Representation in Children's Books", Joan Baronberg noted that, unfortunately, all this discussion and publicity

"occasioned a strange leap of faith among the public, professional as well as general, so that today we are all rather complacent in our assurance that the world of children's books is at last racially balanced."

Several factors can be cited to support this pessimism. First, we have only to note the extremely slow progress which has characterized any of the changes in textbook treatment of minorities that have been found. Practically every step of "progress" has been met with opposition and controversy. For example, not long after the events in Detroit, conservative elements in California attacked a newly state adopted text as being "too favorable to minority groups". Max Rafferty, State Superintendent of Public Instruction, agreed with the critics, stating that the text "needs a major salvage effort". More recently in West Virginia, conservative groups protested the use of multicultural texts, claiming that they "demean, encourage skepticism, or foster disbelief in the institutions of America and in Western civilization".

Since the early sixties, there has been a great deal of Southern opposition to the use of "integrated" and more recently "multicultural" texts. In order to avoid the loss of the lucrative Southern market, a number of publishers went so far as to publish two editions of the same text--an all-white edition and an integrated edition. Such behavior on the part of publishers is clear evidence that it is <u>projected sales</u> that determines textbook treatment of minorities and not a basic commitment to balanced and fair representation of all Americans.

In addition to such political and economic considerations, recognition must also be given to the complexities inherent in textbook evaluation and

selection itself. We cannot assume that there is a simple, obvious test for detecting the presence of textbook bias. In fact, there are complex ideological, conceptual and methodological issues which need to be grappled with before we can make a valid assessment of the extent of textbook bias. Nor can we assume that once we have a valid assessment of the extent of textbook bias that the solution to the problem is simple or obvious.

Before getting into these issues in greater detail - I want to point to the three major categories of bias that have been found - Invisibility or Omission, Stereotyping or Distortion, and Inferiority or Denigration. Each of these forms of bias manifests itself differently at different levels and in different subject areas. There is also a big distinction between nonfiction social studies and fiction, such as in reading, math, and science textbooks, in how to go about removing and counteracting textbook biases.

II. Issues

In order to evaluate textbooks for bias it is necessary to have some sort of yardstick or set of standards against which comparisons can be made, and conclusions may be drawn. While the more blatant forms of racism and sexism are generally agreed upon and relatively easy to identify, the more subtle forms present some problems. For example, while everyone would agree that racial slurs of the type described in the first chapter are clear manifestations of bias, not everyone agrees on the "best" way to portray minorities in our multicultural/pluralistic society. While some people feel the similarity of all people should be stressed in textbooks, others feel the unique characteristics of different cultures should be emphasized. Those on both sides of this issue feel that to not portray minorities according to their standards constitutes a clear manifestation of bias.

Analagous problems emerge when attempting to decide the "best" way for textbooks to portray females in our society. For example, should the similarity between men and women be stressed by portraying them whenever possible in similar occupations, roles, and with similar personality traits and characteristics? Or should textbook portrayals reflect the present-day differences which do exist between males' and females' occupations, roles, and personalities?

Questions like the ones posed here should be considered before attempting to evaluate bias against minorities and females in textbooks. The major issues need to be delineated, and the assumptions underlying your particular project need to be spelled out. There are at least two major ideological issues to be considered. The first has to do with the duality between the "assimilationist" and the "cultural pluralist" ideologies. The second has to do with the romanticization of reality and the avoidance of controversial issues.

1. Assimilation vs. Cultural Pluralism: A Resolution and Proposed Guidelines

In his recent presidential address to the Society for The Psychological Study of Social Issues (SPSSI), Dr. Harry Triandis addressed the question of "The Future of Pluralism". In his address, he defined assimilation as "a policy of making each cultural group adopt the culture of the mainstream". This has also been referred to as the "melting pot" ideology. In contrast, cultural pluralism can be defined as "a policy of coordinating the goals of each cultural group, but allowing each group to maintain its culture".

James Banks, a prolific black educator concerned with the education of minorities, has described the divergent perspectives on the education of minority children which emanate from these two ideological positions.

"Pluralists . . . believe that the curriculum should be drastically revised so that it will reflect the cognitive styles, cultures, and aspirations of ethnic groups, especially the 'visible' minorities. The pluralist argues that learning materials should be culture-specific and that the major goal of the curriculum should be to help the child to function more successfully within his or her ethnic culture. The curriculum should stress events from the points of view of specific ethnic groups and promote ethnic attachments and allegiances."

In contrast, the assimilationist "feels that the pluralist greatly exaggerates the extent of cultural differences within American society /and/ that the best way to promote the goals of American society and to develop commitments to the ideals of American democracy is to promote the full socialization of all individuals and groups into the common civic culture... The primary goal of the school, like other publicly supported institutions, should be to socialize individuals into the common culture and enable them to function more successfully within it. At best, the school should take a position of 'benign neutrality' in matters related to the ethnic attachments of its students."

James Banks feels that while both of these ideologies have some validity, it is more useful to combine them into one ideology "which reflects both of these positions and yet avoids their extremes." Banks advocates the "pluralist-assimilationist" ideology, which is found near the center of the continuum which has the cultural pluralist and the assimilationist ideologies at the extreme ends.

With regard to the curriculum, the "pluralist-assimilationist believes that the curriculum should reflect the cultures of various ethnic groups and the common culture. . . . The school curriculum should respect the ethnic attachments of students and make use of them in positive ways. However, the students should be given options regarding their political choices and the actions which they take regarding their ethnic attachments. The major goal of the curriculum should be to help the individual to function effectively within the common culture, his or her ethnic culture, and other ethnic cultures."

For purposes of guiding educational policy and curricular reform, the pluralist-assimilationist position makes a great deal of sense. It places value on individual ethnic identities while it recognizes the fact that all groups are ultimately participating in one shared culture. The position assumes that all groups -- majority as well as minority -- benefit from exposure to the diversity of ethnic cultures in our society. Thus, it is just as important for white children to learn about black culture and history as it is for black children to learn about white culture and history.

Social psychologist Harry Triandis made a similar point when he recently proposed the concept of "additive multiculturalism". "In short, the majority culture can be enriched by considering the viewpoints of the several minority cultures that exist in America, rather than trying to force these minorities to adopt a monocultural, impoverished, provincial viewpoint, which may in the long run reduce creativity and the chances of effective adjustment in a fast changing world." . . . The way to reduce conflict is not for one side to lose what the other gains, but for both sides to gain." . . . "Desirable pluralism permits everyone to have additive multicultural experiences.

Ideally, pluralism involves enjoyment of our ability to switch from one cultural system to another. . . . The multicultural person get kicks out of life that are simply not available to the monolingual/monocultural person. There is a thrill associated with the competence to master different environments; to be successful in different settings." (Underlining added)

The general criticisms of books which come out of an assimilationist ideology may be broken down into more specific practices to be avoided. At least seven such practices have been identified in Macmillan's Guidelines for creating positive sexual and racial images in educational materials and are described below.

1. Paternalism. This is seen when minority persons are talked down to, treated with condescension or are stereotyped as "dependent", "needing favors", and "childlike". In contrast, white persons are depicted as inherently self-sufficient or generous when recognizing freedoms they had no right to curtail in the first place. An example is the glorification of white heroes and their "magnanimous" acts for the "less fortunate", or the use of expressions of astonishment when describing achievements that are taken for granted in a white person.

2. Assumption of Inferiority of Nonwhite Cultures. This is seen when any culture, ideals, goals and morals other than those of the white middle-class are equated with lack of advantage and inferiority. An example is found in a set of teacher instructions: "These tests are designed to measure the abilities of the culturally disadvantaged child. They were field-tested with 500 black and Spanish-speaking children ..."

3. Omission of Minority Culture. This is seen in the portrayal of only the commercialized version of "typical" American life. Materials should contain

a diversity of symbols that all children in America can relate to. Every child should be able to recognize something of his or her own life, with the clear message that lifestyles and customs that are different from one's own are equally valid. The following should be avoided: Christmas as a secular holiday, ignoring the diversity of New Year's celebrations, urban street scenes with no language but English visible, no mention of sports, holidays and other special events unique to minority groups.

4. Overemphasis on Root Cultures. This is seen in textbooks which include materials about the original countries from which some American minorities came but little or no material about these persons in relation to this country's development and current life. For example, a textbook's only references to minorities might be in an African folk tale, a Mexican short story, and the story of Confucius, with no mention of Black, Mexican and Asian Americans in contemporary life.

5. Assimilation and Tokenism. This is seen when there is reinforcement for the idea that races other than white can be "tolerated" in small numbers and that their presence is "acceptable", so long as they are assimilated and submerged into the masses. For example, one black face in a sea of white faces, or one Asian family in an all white neighborhood can be considered cases of "tokenism".

6. Limited Aspirations and Attainment. This is seen when stereotypical limited aspirations are attributed to minority children and when minority adults are exclusively shown in menial or stereotypic jobs such as Black male bellhops, shoeshine "boys", busdrivers, etc., Black female maids, Chinese American laundryworkers, etc. Success and failure should be distributed in balanced proportion among all groups.

7. "Safe" leaders and writers. This is seen when there is an exclusive concentration on historically "acceptable" minority leaders and writers, while more contemporary or controversial individuals are omitted.

Romanticizing about Reality and Avoidance of Controversial Issues

In addition to reflecting an assimilationist ideology, publishers' earliest response to the problem of textbook bias reflected their beliefs about what constitutes an "ideal" society. An "ideal" world was seen as one in which children of all racial and ethnic groups are able to live and play together in complete harmony, unaware of and unencumbered by racial conflict. The rationale for such an approach was that an idealized or romanticized version of reality may serve as a model for children to emulate, and can help to reduce the saliency of race in an otherwise racist society.

This "idealistic" position is faulty for several reasons. First, it has been noted that the mere representation of different skin colors in a book constitutes an important stimulus to young children. If this stimulus is then not dealt with explicitly, it only confuses children rather than enlightening them. Baronberg put it this way: "That a book can present black people and by the fact of not saying they are black thus make their blackness unimportant, unnoticed, or even invisible is an impossibility and worse still, a denial of the very things we are trying to teach." A great deal of work on the early recognition of racial differences by preschool children provides support for this notion that it is impossible to make color differences "invisible" to children, even putting aside the question of the desirability of doing so.

Textbooks have an obligation to present a fair, balanced and accurate picture of minorities and race relations so they can contribute to the easing of race relations and the elimination of prejudice. Research shows that by

the time children enter school, they are already aware of racial differences and are manifesting prejudicial attitudes. For example, one study showed that in a racially heterogeneous group of five to seven-year old children, 27% expressed open rejection of Jews and 68% openly rejected Blacks. As James Banks pointed out, "since the public school is committed to the democratic ethos in principle, it has a major responsibility to foster racial attitudes which will contribute to the elimination of discrimination in American society." Textbooks can and should play a major role in the fostering of positive attitudes about minorities and women.

The idea that schools have a responsibility to deal with controversial issues is relatively recent. Traditionally, schools have chosen to not deal with controversial issues, and teachers, by and large, have ignored controversial issues, even when students expressed interest in discussing them.

In light of this discussion, the second guiding principle is that textbooks should not avoid, distort, idealize, or romanticize about controversial issues related to minorities. Rather, their portrayals should be honest, balanced, and realistic. Four specific objectionable practices which have been identified are described below.

1. Romanticism. This is seen in textbooks which tend to glorify unjust situations on the one hand, and to ignore or gloss over harsh realities on the other. Examples of romanticism might include the idealization of slavery and poverty, and the failure to describe brutality where it occurred. A specific example might be a story about a black child making a trouble-free adjustment to an all-white school; or a story about a migrant family that lives together in perfect loving harmony, without any mention of the intolerable conditions under which they live.

2. Avoidance of Responsibility. This occurs when there is a denial of the harsh and oppressive conditions under which minority persons have lived, and a sidestepping of the issue of white participation in creating those conditions. For example, when slavery and migrant and factory labor exploitation are presented as benign, justified by economic imperatives and oversimplified explanations; or when the harsh treatment of American Indians is justified by stressing the "need" for more land and pioneers' courage in defending themselves against "wild savages". Avoidance is seen in the reluctance to identify bigots and bigotry, and the extreme measures by which some white Americans made life miserable for minority people.

An example from an actual text is the following: "It was cold in the North. It was too cold to grow cotton. So people in the North did not own slaves. They did not need them." Another example is when the Cherokee "Trail of Tears" is described in terms of the white settlers' "need" for land and the reservation land provided for the Indians.

3. Denial or tacit acceptance of prejudice. This is seen when, by over-simplification or omission of certain facts, the impression is given that prejudice based on color or sex is an acceptable way of behaving. An example was seen in a picture book in which a "No Blacks" sign suddenly appeared over a store entrance. Since the book did not offer any explanation for the sign, children would be left with the impression that no explanation is necessary, i.e., this is an accepted part of life.

Tacit acceptance of prejudice is also manifested when stories are developed from the point of view of white characters and their families only, with no comparable portrayals of similar dimensions in the lives of minority characters. An example was seen in a story about a Puerto Rican girl who

is ridiculed for her difficulty in speaking English. The other children in the class were never chastised for their teasing behavior. Another example was seen in a story about a black boy who was portrayed as terrified when entering an all-white school. The story never justified his fear by explaining his earlier experience with racial discrimination.

4. "They could make it if they tried" attitude. This attitude maintains that success is guaranteed if one is properly motivated, strives for an education, and perseveres. It ignores the institutional and individual injustices minorities and women have and continue to face. Characters in such books are usually "paragons of virtue who overcome their problems by conforming to a few simple rules". For example, characters in such stories are found to be successful when they: prove themselves to whites by being better, working harder, and cooperating; ignore insults and wear the mantle of interminable foregiveness; repress anger and restrain any sign of emotion; and/or are clean and neat.

Minority persons should be depicted as possessing virtues that allow for self-realization--but not for placating, appeasing, over-compensation, or apologizing. For example; a story about a Mexican girl who gains acceptance in a school by being unfailingly cheerful, friendly and helpful, or about a black man who achieves recognition equal to that of his white peers because he breaks all the sales records in the company.

Emphasizing the Full Potential of Minorities and Women

While textbooks should avoid romanticizing or idealizing about the historical oppression of minorities and women in factual material (e.g., social studies textbooks), fictional or hypothetical material (e.g., reading textbooks, hypothetical examples in mathematics textbooks) should emphasize

what can be, rather than what is. For example, the fact that women and minorities do not yet hold a proportionate share of high status positions in our society can be discussed, but it should not prevent them from being portrayed in such positions.

There are several reasons why presentations of minorities and women should not be limited to their actual levels of achievement and occupational attainment. First, employment statistics are constantly changing, so that by the time the books are published they will probably be outdated anyway. Second, and more important, if we merely represent the status quo we may be interpreted as condoning it, i.e., this is the way things are equals this is the way things are supposed to be. We thereby serve to perpetuate the inferior status of minorities and women by setting up self-fulfilling prophecies of limited aspirations and attainment.

III. Impact

A large body of research demonstrates the negative impact of racial prejudice on the development of minority children. For example, studies conducted up until this decade consistently found that young black children tended to devalue blacks, to idealize whites, and to experience considerable conflict over their own racial group membership. In fact, studies showed that black children were so affected by the discriminatory social climate that they sometimes fantasied that they were white. Very recent evidence suggests that, due to the increasing emphasis on Black heritage and culture, black children are becoming more accepting of their racial identity. However, black children are still not as accepting of their racial identity as are white children.

Suprisingly little research has examined the impact of textbooks on non-academic attitudes and related behaviors. The limited amount of research which does exist can be divided into three somewhat overlapping categories: that which has focused on attitude and value change resulting from reading (including the ways in which the reader's predispositions, attitudes and values mediate such change); that which has looked at the effects of reading on personality development, both normal and problematic; and that which has examined the impact of non-academic aspects of reading content on achievement. I will briefly review a few representative studies in each of these areas, pointing to the strengths and weaknesses of the research.

Part 1. The impact of reading on attitudes and values

While a great deal of writing has been generated on the effects of children's literature on their attitudes and values, relatively little empirical research has actually been conducted in this area.

An early study by Jackson (1944) investigated the effects of reading upon attitudes toward black people in a group of southern white children. Jackson assumed that "much of the hostility toward the Negro is a result of the failure of the southern white to perceive that the Negro is essentially a creature like himself" (p. 47). Therefore, Jackson attempted to influence children's attitudes by having them read fiction which "sympathetically" presented black people with whom they could (presumably) identify.

Not surprisingly, Jackson was unable to find any books in use in 1944 which treated black people sympathetically and could potentially influence children's attitudes. Therefore, a short story was constructed to meet the needs of the study.

The experimental design involved a pre-test, reading of the materials, post-test, and another post-test two weeks later. A control group took all the tests but did not read the nonracist materials. Subjects were junior high school students.

Jackson found a "small but significant shift from a less to a more favorable attitude" toward black people. Unfortunately, however, the shift was not lasting. The gain resulting from the brief exposure to nonracist materials was lost after only two weeks. This lent support to the viewpoint expressed earlier by Kelley and Krey: "modification of such attitudes can be accomplished only by repeated or reinforced treatment extending at least through the school years and often beyond that time" (1934, p. 93).

More recently, Fisher (1965) tested the hypothesis that reading material about American Indians would help overcome prejudice in fifth-grade children. The results indicated that the greatest attitude change had occurred in the group which both read and discussed the stories. The group which read the stories but did not discuss them also showed significant attitude change over the control group.

Several studies showed the very positive impact multi-ethnic readers can have on white children's racial attitudes. Litcher and Johnson (1966) examined the validity of two alternative theoretically based hypotheses about the effects of presenting materials which portray Blacks in a positive way (thus contradicting prevailing prejudices and stereotypes). The first hypothesis, based on a social perception paradigm, predicts that materials portraying blacks positively would be either distorted in various ways to support prevailing stereotypes and prejudices, or ignored and quickly forgotten. The second hypothesis is based on a "counter-conditioning" model. It predicts that the repeated pairing of the stimulus "Black person" (which

was presumed to elicit a negative response) with stimuli characteristic of "middle class" (which is presumed to elicit a positive response) will result in a positive response to the stimulus "Black person" provided the stimulus "Black person" does not elicit a more powerful response than that elicited by the stimuli characteristic of "middle class".

To examine the validity of these two hypotheses, the study used "multi-ethnic" readers which portrayed Black people as having middle-class characteristics (e.g., works hard, dresses neatly, etc.) in integrated situations. Using a pre-test-post-test design, the racial attitudes of 34 white children who used a multi-ethnic reader for four months were compared with those of 34 white children who used the regular "all-white" reader. It should be noted that the readers were the only "multi-ethnic" materials in the classrooms, and that the teachers did not discuss the racial differences of the characters with the children. Four distinct measures of racial attitudes were used: a variation of the Clark Doll Test (Gregor & McPherson, 1966); the Horowitz and Horowitz (1938) "Show Me" and Categories Tests, and a Direct Comparison Test (Black & Dennis, 1943).

The results of the study were dramatic. On every one of the four tests, (which were found to be measuring relatively independent dimensions of racial attitudes), the children who had used the "Multi-ethnic" readers developed markedly more favorable attitudes toward Black people. In comparison to the control group, these children decreased their preference for their own racial group over the other, reduced the amount of social distance placed between the white and Black racial groups, were less likely to exclude a child on the basis of race, and were less likely to attribute negative traits to Blacks

and positive traits to whites. In addition, "examination of the individual items revealed that the experimental group basically became equalitarian in their response" (p. 151).

The Litcher and Johnson study clearly demonstrated that white children who were exposed to multi-ethnic readers exhibited more positive racial attitudes than those who were not, thus providing tentative support for the counter-conditioning hypothesis.

Many other studies also showed positive results. For example, a study by Johnson (1967) examined the impact on Black children of participation in a "Freedom School" where Black history was taught. The hypothesis was that "through a positive presentation of Black history and culture, the distorted and disparaging view that many Negroes hold about themselves will be ameliorated".

The results of Johnson's study demonstrated that the Freedom School which emphasized "multi-ethnic" materials that portrayed Black people positively did have a positive effect on the student's self and racial attitudes. The boys in particular, became much more convinced that Blacks and Whites are equal. The effect of the school on the girls was less clear, however. The girls in the sample had more favorable self and racial attitudes than the boys at the beginning of their participation, and the boys were much more affected by participation than the girls. Although evidence is lacking, one contributing factor to this lesser impact on girls may be that the Black history courses emphasized male accomplishments and male history, just as most white history courses have been shown to do (Trecker, 1972).

Gezi and Johnson (1970) attempted to enhance racial attitudes in white elementary school children through the study of Black Heritage in social studies.

The study compared the effects of a semester course on Africa, in which factual knowledge was stressed, with a course designed to involve the students in "meaningful firsthand and vicarious experiences with Africans and their culture". Thus, the children were provided with personal relationships with African people and with Americans who had been to Africa, corresponded with children in Africa, and read African tales and poetry.

Gezi et al.'s study suggested that greater attitude change results from a personal experiential approach than from a factual didactic approach to Black Studies. Indeed, they found that no significant attitude change resulted from the latter approach. It is unfortunate that they were unable to include a second control group, however, which had no exposure to a Black Studies course at all. Comparison with such a control group may have shown that the factual approach, while not the ideal, does result in significant improvement over no Black Studies at all.

Roth (1969) investigated the effects of Black Studies on Black students' pride and self concept. The results were intriguing. The students in the experimental condition exhibited positive gains in their attitudes toward both Black and White people. This indicated to the investigator that Black Studies results in positive racial pride without the feared 'hate whitey' phenomenon.

Research by Georgeoff (1968) examined the impact of Black Studies on the self-concepts of both white and non-white children. The results of this research suggested that both white and non-white children experienced an improvement in their self-concepts after studying Black heritage and culture.

After reviewing all the literature on the effects of reading content on behavior, Zimet (1975, p. 21) concluded that "in each instance where change occurred, attitudes changed in a positive direction with positive character presentations and in a negative direction with negative character presentations" and that "in all the studies, the greatest change occurred when the story was combined with a follow-up discussion."

Schneyer (1969, p. 51) pointed out that discussions may be useful because they help students clarify misconceptions and share relevant experiences and feelings. Obviously, the nature of the discussion, and the extent to which the teacher is perceived as being free of prejudice is crucial.

Only two studies checked to see if the changes in attitudes were retained after a lapse of time. In both these studies, the gains in positive feelings had been lost after a relatively short period of time. The implication is that for changes in attitudes brought about by reading materials to be longlasting, they should be reinforced over time. On the other hand, the extent to which school materials can counteract contradictory influences outside of school, as well as contradictory peer influences within the school remains unclear at this time. One reviewer of this topic, Zimet (1975, p. 21) concluded that "while it would appear that much of the sustaining and long-term influence of reading is dependent upon its reinforcement in the home and community, by one's family and friends, the potential for changing a point of view has been demonstrated by the immediate effect books do have on children's beliefs". In other words, nonsexist/nonracist textbooks alone may not be sufficient for bringing about egalitarian attitudes and behaviors, but they certainly would be a step in the right direction.

Reader's Predispositions as Mediating Factors in Attitude Change

A number of studies have shown that certain reader traits can either enhance or minimize the effects of reading on attitude change. For example, people with compulsive, rigid personalities may be unable to shift from previously developed prejudicial attitudes (Schneyer, 1969, p. 57). McKillop (1969) demonstrated that children (like adults) tend to interpret what they read to be consistent with their own attitudes and biases. The objectivity of their reading was inversely proportional to the intensity of their feelings about the issues involved.

A second mediating factor is the extent of the reader's previous knowledge about an issue. An early study by Cherrington (1934) suggested that, at least in college students, the less the reader knows about the complexities of and objections to issues raised, the greater the change in attitudes will be. More recently, several researchers have offered the generalization that children are more likely to be influenced by the media the less complete their knowledge is from other sources (Kimmel, 1970). Thus, ..."in value areas where the parents have strong, explicitly stated views, and where the parents serve as models for their children's actions, the media will have little effect." On the other hand, "the values and attitudes which should be most vulnerable to media influence should be those concerning which the significant people in the child's life have not taken a stand". Furthermore, "children in homes where the parents do not interact frequently with their children should be more susceptible to media influence than children whose relationship with parents is more intense" (Hoffman and Hoffman, 196 , p. 342 (Vol. 1)).

Two final studies can help put into perspective this discussion of the impact of reading materials on children. Smith (1948) conducted a study to assess the self-reported effects of reading on children. Teachers of fourth- through eighth-grade children asked their pupils if they remembered any book,

story, poem, or article which changed their thinking or attitudes in any way and if so, to write about it. No pressure was put on anyone to write. Those children who did not have anything to write were free to engage in other activities.

The largest number of responses, 61%, discussed changes in attitudes which had taken place as a result of reading.

Girl Grade 6 — The book Silk and Satin Lane has answered many questions for me. I have always wondered how the Chinese boys and girls were different from us. To me they seemed queer and I couldn't believe they have the same ambitions that we have. The real reason was that I have never been with Chinese children or read about them. (p. 272)

Boy Grade 8 — "I learned that Indians have honor and are not all savages and I have a respect for them that I didn't have before"

Girl Grade 6 — "Although I didn't like to admit it, I thought the white people were better than the Negroes. But I changed my mind after reading Call me Charlie. This was a story of a Negro boy who came to a new community. There were no Negroes in that town and so Charlie had to make friends with the other boys which was not easy since most of those boys felt just as I had. Charlie proved himself a good citizen and a good friend.

"I think now that I would play with Charlie if he came to my town. The color of the skin makes no difference. (p. 273)

More recently, Shirley (1969) conducted a similar study on a sample of high school students. She asked 420 students to report any changes in concepts, attitudes and behaviors that they had experienced as a result of reading. A questionnaire was used as the major instrument. It was supplemented by a limited number of interviews and case studies.

A taxonomy was developed to classify all the responses into areas influenced by reading. Seven areas emerged from this analysis. In order of frequency, these were "self-image", "philosophy of life", "cultural groups", "social problems", "sensitivity to people", "political science", and "miscellaneous". Just about every one of these areas of influence suggests

that we can expect changes related to gender and racial issues to come about from reading.

Different types of reactions

Some reacted as "participators". The "partial participator" was only "tentatively involved", as illustrated in the following reaction to Black Like Me by J. Griffin.

> "Felt more sympathetic toward people of the Negro race, whereas before I had had a dislike for their violent demonstrations. I still don't condone these demonstrations but I understand the cause..."

In general Shirley's study confirmed that reading does influence concepts, attitudes and behavior. Only 16 of the 420 students (less than 4%) reported no personal influence from reading. Of the 1184 different influences reported, 40% involved changes in attitudes, 45% new concepts, and 15% behavioral changes.

Shirley's study had a number of interesting findings. First, she found no difference between the influence of fiction and nonfiction. Half of the total influences reported were from fiction (49.96%) and half were from non-fiction.

Another intriguing finding was that students were more influenced by reading that was voluntary than by assigned reading. Assuming these results to be accurate, they have very profound implications for the central concerns of this paper. That is, what are the relative benefits and costs of requiring all students to read nonsexist/nonracist materials, or to take mandatory courses in Women's Studies or Black Studies? How can we encourage students

to read materials which value diversity and support egalitarian ideologies without pressuring them to the point that they reject the very values we hope they will adopt? Key areas in which attitude change was reported were in students' self-image, philosophy of life, interpersonal sensitivity, and in their attitudes towards different cultural groups and social problems. Every one of these "key areas" is inextricably linked to sex-role and minority issues.

Part 2. The Inpact of Reading on Personality Development

A considerable amount of attention in the educational literature has been devoted to examining the impact of reading on childrens' personality development. That books can be useful in promoting positive character traits is seen in the recent development of "bibliotherapy" as an acceptable psychotherapeutic technique for helping children deal with emotional conflicts and problems. Bibliotherapy has been defined as "a process of strong interaction between the reader and literature which may be utilized effectively in helping children to solve problems and to develop effectively" (Russell & Shrodes, (see Witty, 1964 for ref.)).

Part 3. The impact of nonacademic aspects of reading content on children's preferences and achievement

Nonacademic aspects of reading content, including sex-typing and minority representation, have been shown to influence a wide range of factors related to children's achievement in school. Children's reading preferences, recall of what they read, understanding of material read, reading skills, problem-solving skills, and arithmatic achievement have all been related to nonacademic aspects of reading content.

B. Effects of Racial Representation on Children's Achievement

A limited amount of research has been addressed to the question of how racial representation in textbooks affects children's preferences for these

materials. White (1972) examined the relationship between racial illustrations accompanying stories in basal readers and children's preferences for these stories. The sample consisted of 144 second grade children from two integrated urban schools. The materials came from two editions of the same basal reader series. One edition had twelve stories with white characters in the illustration and the other had the identical stories with black characters in the illustration. The stories were paired arbitrarily so that each pair consisted of one story with black characters and one story with white characters. Each child was read three story pairs by a white adult and three story pairs by a black adult. After each pair of stories was read, the child selected the story which he or she liked better.

The results indicated that both black and white children preferred stories with illustrations of characters of their own race. There were no sex differences in preferences and there was no effect due to the race of the adult reader. Unfortunately, there were no analyses performed to determine whether the sex of the characters in the illustrations had an effect on preferences, or whether there was a sex of character by race of character interaction in determining preferences. Such an interaction may have revealed, for example, that black girls prefer stories with illustrations of black girls over stories with illustrations of black boys, but that they prefer stories with black characters of either sex over stories with white characters of either sex. On the other hand, research might indicate that sex of character is a more important determinant of black girls' preferences than race of character. This would be a most illuminating study, particularly since it has clear implications about young black girls' relative identification with their racial and gender groups.

Developmental psychologist Jerome Kagan (1958) proposed that the extent to which children can identify with the content of reading materials is a

primary factor in the acquisition of reading skills. He felt that if a particular child's needs are specified and then dramatized in a book, we can be certain that the child will be interested in the book and motivated to read. Unfortunately, this hypothesis has never been tested explicitly.

A study by Gertrude Whipple (1963), however, was based on Kagan's assumptions. Whipple investigated the effects of a multi-ethnic reading series on first-grade children's reading preferences and reading achievement. Whipple hypothesized that by representing the various types of people seen in multi-cultural neighborhoods, children can identify themselves more readily with storybook characters, resulting in greater interest in reading the stories, and consequently, improved reading skills.

Whipple found that the multi-ethnic Series far exceeded the all-white series in interest appeal. Greater interest value was found in every one of the schools, regardless of whether they were located in high, low, or middle socio-economic areas, or whether they were all-black, all-white, or mixed-racial. More than three-quarters of the children chose a multi-ethnic book, and only 24% chose a standard all-white book. This difference was statistically significant at the $p < .01$ level. In addition, observations of the children as they read their favorite book confirmed this conclusion. "Children reading a book of the Standard Series showed no overt reactions, but many of those reading a book of the City Schools Series smiled or chuckled and gave unmistakable evidence of enjoying the story." (p. 20)

The results suggested that the multi-ethnic series was particularly popular with boys. Eighty percent of the boys chose a multi-ethnic book as opposed to 73% of the girls. This sex difference was partially explained by the fact that the Standard all-white series included "the customary

preprimer characters, two girls and one boy, whereas the City Schools Series included one girl and three boys" (p. 20).

Whipple analyzed the children's preferences by race, as well as by race and sex simultaneiously. The results indicated that even though the multi-ethnic series was extremely popular with white students (75% of students in all-white and mixed-racial groups chose multi-ethnic books), it was even more popular with black students (79% of students in all-black schools chose multi-ethnic books). However, it should be noted that children's preference for the multi-ethnic series was not attributed to the racial composition of the characters per se. Rather, the children's preferences were attributed to such factors as the "realistic stories, featuring exciting adventures such as they themselves might have" (p. 30).

One study demonstrated that both black and white children prefer stories with characters of their own race. A second showed that a wide diversity of inner-city children from all ethnic groups (including white middle-class) preferred a multi-ethnic reading series over an all-white series. A third study showed that Black children prefer stories about children who are similar to themselves. Although there are several leaps of inference from dealing with children's storybook preferences to their subsequent reading achievement, a logical hypothesis is that the more children like the stories they are initially exposed to when learning to read, the more they are apt to like reading in general. Thus, preferences for multi-ethnic textbooks may be translated into achievement gains in reading to the extent that attitudes about reading affect subsequent reading habits and achievement. It could even be speculated that a more positive initial attraction for reading which results from greater minority group representation in reading materials could carry over into a

generally more positive attitude towards school. In turn, this attraction for school could result in achievement gains in a number of areas other than reading.

One study which did compare the reading achievement of children using a multi-ethnic series of readers vs. an all-white series found some support for this speculation. Significantly better reading achievement scores were attained with the multi-ethnic books as compared with the all-white books. A second study found that black ghetto elementary school children significantly improved in their social studies achievement when they took a course in black studies.

Methodological Pitfalls in this Research

Examples include sampling problems, confounding of teacher and book influences, unreliable and invalid assessment instruments, lack of adequate controls, design problems, dated findings and need for replication, and follow-up for duration of effects.

Besides the methodological shortcomings which plagued much of this research, major conceptual problems are also a concern. First, the research has not adequately dealt with the problems of conceptualizing and operationally defining what is meant by a nonsexist/nonracist textbook or intervention. The effects of anything from "color me brown" readers to an entire Black Studies curriculum have been investigated, with no quantitative or qualitative distinctions being made between these approaches. Similarly, nonsexist curricula have been evaluated which involved anything from readers where characters were engaged in nonstereotypic occupations to more intensive consciousness-raising activities. Second, as was the case with studies of biases in textbooks, the research on impact has dealt either with the effects of nonracist materials on racial attitudes, or with the effects of nonsexist materials on sex role attitudes.

No studies have looked at the impact of materials which are both nonracist and nonsexist on both racial and sex role attitudes.

In light of these rather significant limitations, there is a clear need for a great deal of additional research in this area.